

Raising Poultry for Meat

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THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

May. It's greener. It's brighter. It's Vermont showing off. When the calendar rolls around to the fifth month, the Green Mountains once again become lush.

Around us, the earth awakens, soon offering Vermonters the year's first wild harvest. Dandelions bloom: their sunny heads compose a breathtaking site as they carpet our fields in yellow. Some folks will even pick them for greens, or carefully snip their flowers to make dandelion wine. In the forest, ramps, also known as wild onions, cover the forest floor. This edible plant is delicious chopped into salads, atop a pizza, and minced into pesto for pasta. Beside the stone wall or in the riverbed, Vermonters forage for fiddleheads in the moist earth, until they unfurl into ferns. It's a treat that's often pickled or just steamed

with Vermont butter. Yum.

May also goes wild with wildflowers. While hunting turkeys, fixing the fence, or working the land you may take a moment to observe Vermont's abundance of wildflowers - Marsh Marigolds, Lady Slippers, Hepaticas - the list goes on. A book authored by the late United States Senator George D. Aiken, *Pioneering with Wildflowers*, is one great resource for identifying Vermont's first spring flowers. First published in 1935, the guide was so popular that it has been reprinted several times, helping generations of Vermonters figure out the mysteries in the earth before them.

May also means migration. The birds are back in big numbers. From the Hermit Thrush, Vermont's state bird, to the American Bittern, they entertain us from the crack of dawn until dusk. Open and fertile farm fields provide habitat for countless species of birds, and farmers often share stories of loyal feathered friends who return each year. Farmers also choose to open their land for recreation, including turkey hunting.

May is turkey season in Vermont.

We are grateful to all the landowners who welcome hunters into their fields and forests. This season the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets are teaming up with Vermont hunters to look for the Lone Star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*). The adult female lone star tick has one spot on the center of its back; the adult male is identified by six markings around its perimeter. This disease-bearing tick, which has been found on turkeys in other northern states, is believed to be in Vermont but has so far eluded capture through surveillance methods. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, as part of our partnership with the Vermont Department of Health to help prevent diseases in humans and

animals, has arranged for volunteers to staff selected reporting stations around the state to inspect (with hunters' permission) turkeys for Lone Star ticks and collect information on the turkey and where it was harvested. Farmers, people who work outside, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts should always do tick checks before coming inside.

Most of all, May marks an annual milestone: we have survived another Vermont winter. This year, we also made it through a very intense mud season as we continued to pay our dues through March and April. Dare we say this mud season was one of the worst "fifth seasons" ever?

We hope Mother Nature is kind to our Vermont farmers and gardeners as they prepare for another growing and harvest season. May... it moves too fast, but we sure do enjoy all that green in the Green Mountains.

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This Month's Recipe

Pesto with Wild Leeks/Ramps

Reader Submitted Recipe by Margaret Osha

Ingredients

- 1 C *chopped leek tops, tightly packed*
- 3 TBSP *of walnuts or nuts of your choice*
- ½ C *of extra virgin olive oil*
- ¾ C *of grated parmesan cheese*
- A *squeeze of Lemon*
- A *pinch of sea salt*

Prep Work

If you have harvested the whole plant use a knife to separate the leaves from the stem and bulb. Set aside the bulb section for another application. Wash approximately 3 cups of leek leaves well, removing any particles of dirt or mud.

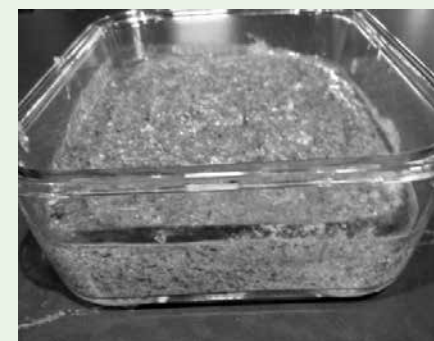
To preserve the color and prevent the pesto from oxidizing

and turning brown, blanch the leek leaves in boiling water for 30 seconds and transfer them directly into a bowl of ice water to prevent further cooking.

Gather the leaves and squeeze out as much of the water as possible. I like to give the leaves a rough chop.

Directions

In a food processor combine the chopped leek tops and the walnuts (or nuts of your choice). Process nuts and leeks are well blended. Add the extra virgin olive oil in a steady stream through the top of the food processor. Add the remaining ingredients and process until well blended. Add more olive oil if you deem necessary for the desired consistency.



Storing

Spread the pesto into the bottom of a glass container about an inch in thickness. Transfer the dish to the freezer. (Ice cube trays would work well for step as well.) Once frozen, cut the pesto into small cubes and repackage into freezer bags. Remember a little bit goes a long way. Enjoy!

WORKING LANDS ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE

Center for Women & Enterprise Vermont Benefits from Business and Financial Planning Support

By Clare Salerno, Vt Agency of
Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Center for Women & Enterprise (CWE) received two grants of \$20,000 in 2019 and 2022 to support its business and financial planning programs for women-owned working lands businesses in Vermont. CWE is a New England non-profit economic empowerment organization whose mission is to strengthen communities and the economy by supporting women to launch and successfully sustain businesses. Opened in 2016, the Vermont Women's Business Center operates in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration. With its first Working Lands Enterprise Fund (WLEF) grant in 2019, CWE launched a pilot program specifically tailored to serve working lands businesses. The pilot focused on empowering women in the Northeast Kingdom and southern Vermont to build successful businesses, increase financial resources, create jobs, and drive economic growth.

The initial pilot launched two programs targeted to the needs of women-owned working lands businesses: a business planning course aimed at start-up and early-stage businesses and a strategic planning program for businesses poised for growth. These programs seek to empower women to build successful businesses, increase financial resources, create jobs, and drive economic growth. The business planning program provides entrepreneurs with learning opportunities to enhance their



Giacomo (left) and Jennifer (right) Vascotto, owners and operators of Trenchers Farmhouse in Lyndonville. Jennifer participated in CWE's business planning course for women-owned working lands businesses in 2020, which was funding through the Working Lands Enterprise Fund.

executive business skills. Class topics include financial capability, marketing to target customers, and options for funding start-up and operating costs.

CWE's working lands programs engage rural entrepreneurs and women in non-traditional fields, including farmers, value-added producers, food manufacturers, food retailers, forest landowners, and secondary wood processors. The first round of programming served 59 businesses, providing 100 hours of support. CWE held two sessions of a business planning course, a course on personal to business financials, in addition to individual financial counseling. Within six months of course graduation, five participants opened their businesses, and graduates created eight new jobs. Also in that time, graduates who reported on progress retained 17 jobs and generated over \$167,000 in

sales.

Through the first WLEF grant, CWE also developed a new partnership with the Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) in Hardwick to conduct courses on how to start a food business and exploring startups. CAE staff also provided individual counseling to participants, and the initial collaboration sparked through the WLEF grant has generated a sustainable partnership between CWE and CAE. One CAE staff

person serves on CWE's Core Counselor team, and the two organizations share resources and work together to host a business planning course. This partnership between CWE and CAE fills an important niche in providing support to women working lands entrepreneurs in rural Vermont.

CWE received a second WLEF grant last fall and is gearing up to launch another round of business planning programs and individual counseling programs, with some enhancements. Though WLEF does not directly support a new Community Navigators program, a graduate of initial WLEF-funded pilot course leads the Community Navigators program. CWE will also convene affinity groups to provide additional supports to rural residents, the Southern Vermont community, BIPOC Women Entrepreneurs, and Veterans.

To learn more about and to register for CWE's upcoming programs, visit cweonline.org/About-CWE/CWE-Vermont.

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative funding opportunities will re-open in fall 2022. Please visit workinglands.vermont.gov for more information.



Pasta, focaccia, biscotti, semifreddo, and other products from Trenchers Farmhouse Gastronomica of Vermont in Lyndonville. Co-owner Jennifer Vascotto participated in a CWE business planning course, and the business also sources ingredients from several farms and enterprises that have also received grants from the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative.

Creating a Culture of Farm Safety

By Dan Baker, University of Vermont & Jed Davis, Agri-Mark/Cabot

The University of Vermont (UVM) was awarded a \$350,000 grant from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center to develop and deliver a dairy farmworker safety training program in conjunction with regional support organizations. The training will be responsive to needs identified by the farmworker community and offered in both English and Spanish.

The dairy farmers who have the longest careers in agriculture are those who have spent some time thinking about and prioritizing farm safety. Large dairy cows, heavy machinery, repetitive motion, and farm chemicals are just a few of the daily encounters that farmers and farmworkers must consider. And while some other industries have seen injury rates decline over time, the rate of farm accidents has remained stubbornly high.

As the size of average Vermont dairy farms has grown, so has the need for many farms to hire non-family labor to help milk the cows, care for youngstock, fix equipment and manage cropland. Chronic labor shortages have been challenging. To make up for this shortfall, Vermont farmers have turned to migrant labor, mostly from Mexico and Guatemala, to help keep their farms running. Most of these



workers are employed as milkers and Vermont dairy depends heavily on these workers.

A migrant Spanish-speaking workforce with related cross-cultural communications issues and safety concerns adds to the challenge farmers face running their business safely and efficiently. Many Latino migrant farmworkers are relatively new to dairy, without the background knowledge of those raised in a dairy environment. In farmer surveys in 2010 and 2018 we found many farmers relying on off-farm translators and hand-signals to communicate with their employees. While the situation has gotten better with technology, such as cell phone translator apps, explaining risk in an already challenging environment remains difficult. In fact, in two research studies of Latino dairy workers in 2016 and 2018/19, UVM researchers found that concern about being injured on a dairy farm was among the top sources of farmworker stress reported by migrant dairy

farmworkers.

Vermont has not had a comprehensive farm safety training program since George Cook at UVM Extension and Louise Waterman from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture ran

their program more than five years ago. The state has never had a statewide Spanish-language dairy farm safety training program. With funding from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center, that situation is changing. The University of Vermont and Agri-Mark/Cabot are teaming up with the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety to offer free farm safety training programs in both English and Spanish.

Beginning this spring, UVM Extension will interview both farmers and farmworkers about the farm safety training in which they are most interested.

Subsequent trainings based on the interviews will be offered on-farm and will be tailored to the specific circumstances and interests of that farm. Some farm safety issues require more than training; they require changes in behavior and perspective. Next year, projects will offer farms an opportunity to explore strategies with the aim of achieving a culture of safety on Vermont dairy farms.

For more information, please contact Dan Baker at UVM: daniel.baker@uvm.edu or Jed Davis at Agri-Mark/Cabot: jdavis@cabotchese.coop

Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant Now Accepting Applications

By Ollie Cultrara, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Dairy processors in Vermont and the Northeast are invited to apply for a Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center. These funds allow dairy processors to contract with professional marketing firms to develop marketing tactics, brand improvements, and overall strategy. Whether you're looking to update your website, develop a brand strategy, refresh your brand, get into e-commerce, or

build a social media plan, this grant can help give your business a marketing boost. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% cash or in-kind match required. Applications are due June 23. For more

information, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic/activities/dairy-marketing-branding-services-grant or contact Brockton Corbett at brockton.corbett@vermont.gov or (802) 498-5111.



Collaboration for Conservation

Celebrating 10 Years of Water Quality Partnership and Conservation Implementation

By Alli Lewis, Vermont
Agricultural Water
Quality Partnership

Vermont Agricultural
Water Quality Partnership

The Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership (VAWQP) recently released its 2021 Annual Report, which highlights impacts of state and federal investments toward protecting and improving water quality. This progress marker comes as the Partnership celebrates ten years of collaboration among the nine organizations that assist farmers in their conservation goals.

The VAWQP reports that in 2021, \$24.3 million was invested by state and federal entities throughout Vermont to implement agricultural water quality projects. This assistance helped farmers install conservation practices such as crop rotation, manure injection, reduced tillage and cover crops, and riparian forested and grass buffers. In addition, 235 acres of wetlands were protected through easements on private lands. Wetlands improve water quality by filtering sediments, nutrients, and chemicals; reducing flooding; recharging groundwater; protecting biological diversity; and providing opportunities for educational, scientific, and recreational activities.

It is estimated that farmers invested \$6.3 million of their own dollars, apart from state or federal assistance, to install conservation practices in 2021.

"This report emphasizes the progress farmers are making. Their investments are making a difference in their community and on their farms. We are all rowing in the same direction and it's working," said Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Secretary, Anson Tebbetts.

These meaningful gains in water quality improvement on farms were reflected in the recent Clean Water Initiative Performance (CWIP) report, published by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

The CWIP report summarizes how Vermont's \$257 million investment in water quality over the past six years is paying off by improving water quality in Vermont's rivers, lakes, and wetlands. This report shares that 16% of the Lake Champlain Basin and 12% of the Lake Memphremagog Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) required phosphorus reductions have already been met through clean water programs. Estimated phosphorus load reduction from the agricultural sector in 2021 was estimated at 36.6 metric tons. This includes the results of farmers participating in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Bill programs, and technical assistance and regulatory program results such as the Vermont Agency

of Agriculture, Food and Markets production area compliance.

Vermont is fortunate to have substantial programs and resources available to support farmers in adopting conservation practices for water quality, and it is with enthusiasm that we celebrate 10 years of the Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership (VAWQP). The mission of the VAWQP is to improve agricultural water quality in Vermont by coordinating partners' efforts to provide education, technical and financial assistance to the farming community. The Partnership is collaborating to leverage unique resources, funding mechanisms, technical expertise, outreach techniques, etc. to advance this statewide effort.

"It is collaborations like the Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership

that help us reach our conservation and water quality goals," said Travis Thomason, USDA's Natural

Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist in Vermont.

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'No-Mow-May' Lets Pollinators Play!

By Brooke Decker, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

An increasingly popular conservation initiative called 'No-Mow-May' is blooming across the nation. This initiative follows the 'less-is-more' wisdom we often hear from our parents and is now a popular environmental mantra of the

day. By simply eliminating or sharply reducing the mowing of your lawn and allowing more flowers to bloom offers bees and other pollinators a wonderful playground of floral resources at a critical time in their lifecycle. Studies have shown this simple act can increase abundance and diversity of wildlife in your yard, especially pollinators.

'No-Mow-May' will allow you the time to enjoy observing the diversity of nature in your lawn. Dandelions are often the most noticeable of the spring lawn flowers. They provide abundant nutritional resources for pollinators, especially bees. Observing flowers during a sunny day will display numerous insect guests. Honey bees, bumble bees, or some of Vermont's other 400 native bee species are likely visitors.

As the love for your lawn flowers grows, you might consider mowing less frequently the rest of the year. When mowing becomes necessary, setting the cut height of 4-5 inches allows for better habitat regrowth and continued pollinator benefits during the summer months. Consider turning your lawn into a "bee lawn" by seeding Dutch clover and other low growing flowering plants like creeping thyme, self-heal and native violets.

For a real-life pollinator paradise, consider 'No-Mow-May'!



Attention All Beekeepers!

Please scan the QR code below to take the winter colony loss, pest and disease survey.

For more information contact Brooke Decker via email agr.bees@vermont.gov or by phone 802-272-6688.



VERMONT AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM PLAN 2021 – 2030:

Consumer Demand

Editor's note: This brief is part of the Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan 2021-2030 submitted to the legislature in January 2021. To read the full plan, please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-strategic-plan-2021-2030>

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What's At Stake?

Consumer demand for local, organic, and specialty foods have surged over the last ten years, helping Vermont's agricultural vitality. As these markets are maturing, slowing growth and increased competition are leading to downward price pressure and other scale-related barriers for Vermont producers. While Vermont's food producers are renowned for high-quality products, authentic stories, and inspiring social values, it can be difficult for these businesses to develop marketing platforms and messages in order to stand out in an increasingly crowded field. Americans are exposed to 4,000-10,000 ads each day and only about 100



will successfully penetrate the "attention wall." If Vermont producers want to earn premium pricing, they will need resources and coordination to support strategic and compelling marketing tactics that are able to penetrate the noise and attract consumers' scarce time and attention.

Current Conditions

Vermont has long benefited from a reputation for high-quality, authentic food products. This reputation, or "market value," offers opportunities for increased sales if producers can gain visibility and align with consumers' needs.

To leverage market value, producers must employ good marketing strategies including market research, market positioning, brand development, and marketing tactics. The relatively small size of many Vermont producers limits competitive advantages gained from economies of scale, and their marketing spending is generally believed to be an area of under-investment compared to national industry averages.

Complicating Vermont producers' ability to fulfill consumer demand is that today's food marketplace is no longer the predictable, regular weekly trip to the grocery store. Consumers now purchase food in many different outlets (e.g., supermarkets, "big box" stores, specialty stores, online, etc.) and at many times of day. Disruptions in traditional media and retail channels are mirrored in consumers seeking shopping experiences that fit their custom needs (see Grocers brief, Direct

Markets brief). They are seeking products that align with their particular dietary preferences, and demand transparency of ingredients and production practices.

To stay viable, Vermont's food producers must be savvy to these rapidly shifting consumer trends. In addition, investment is needed in both the private and public sectors to elevate the presence of Vermont products to consumers. Recent examples of state investment to understand consumer demand include consumer-based market research from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAF) and Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) to understand consumer perceptions related to the Vermont brand, maple and specialty cheese.

Demographic Consumer Trends and Consumer Values-based Demand

While baby boomers (b. 1946-1964) still have impact, millennials (b. 1980-1996) are now the largest generational group and are influencing the marketplace with their purchasing choices.

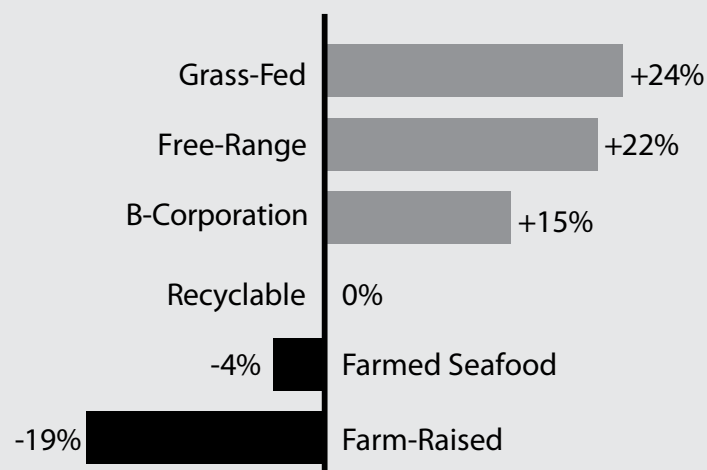
Millennials communicate their identity and values with their product choices. They favor unique and personal experiences, which leads them to try new brands, new channels, and to seek niche shopping experiences. Meanwhile Generation Z (b. 1996-2015) is emerging as the largest and most ethnically diverse generation. Millennials and Gen Z

consumers are increasingly vocal about their purchase experiences and turn to their online networks for purchase advice. Further, these hyper-connected consumers are seeking purchase experiences that appear authentic and will be share-worthy.

Today's consumers demand products that meet their own health needs, emotional values, and broader social concerns. Many of these values have direct relevance to Vermont producers and present strategic marketing and growth opportunities. Local, organic, and non-GMO labels have widespread market appeal. The U.S. local food market grew from \$5 billion in 2008 to \$12 billion in 2014 and is expected to rise to \$20 billion by the end of 2019. Across the board, consumers are emphasizing a need for increased transparency in the foods they are choosing, and to know more about agriculture and food manufacturing practices.

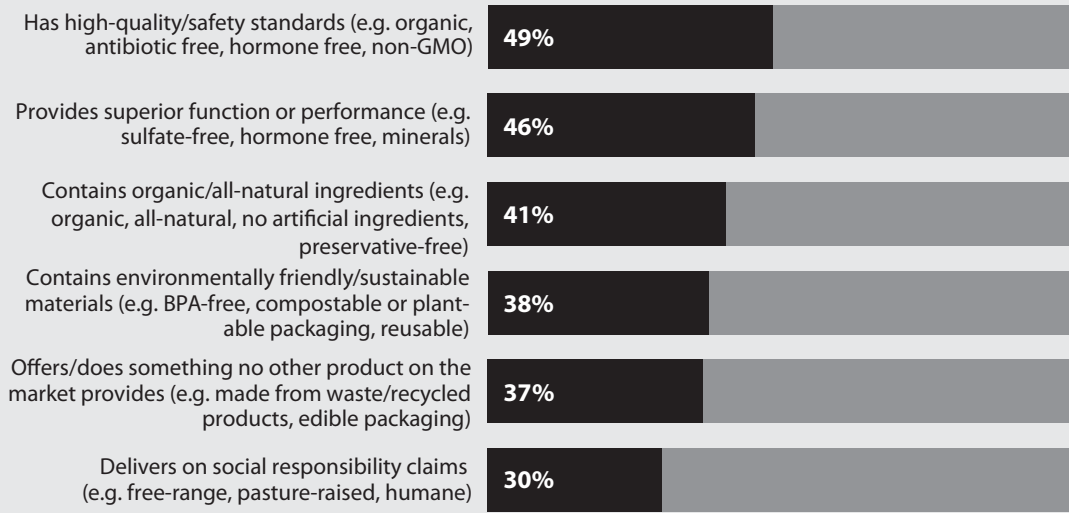
Consumers feel strongly that companies should help improve the environment, and half of global respondents say they're inclined to pay higher-than-average prices for products with high quality standards, which consumers often associate with strong sustainability practices. Just behind safety and function, consumers are willing to open their wallets for products that are organic, made with sustainable materials, or deliver on socially responsible claims. As the

Change in Dollar Sales for Sustainability Claims in U.S., 2017-2018





Percent of Global Consumers Willing to Pay Higher-than-Average Prices For Products with Select Attributes (2018)



concept of “sustainability” matures, consumers are getting more specific in their demands, seeking bundled benefits (e.g., high-protein organic milk) and product innovations (e.g., plant-based proteins).

The organic market is maturing and mainstreaming, leading to declining price points for producers, while the marketplace is seeking large-scale solutions to meet price and volume demands. GMOs continue to rank high in the list of consumer concerns, with almost universal consumer awareness of GMOs, and an estimated half of shoppers avoiding them. Concerns about animal welfare may have increasing impact on Vermont’s food producers, especially as consumers are turning to plant-based beverages and meat substitutes. Plant-based proteins are a good example of a market trend that is meeting the consumer demand for perceived benefits to the environment, health, and animal welfare.

Bottlenecks & Gaps

- Growth of markets like local and organic can pose a variety of challenges for

Vermont’s niche producers as they lack the scale to compete against larger companies with better economies of scale and larger marketing budgets.

- Maintaining price premiums is more difficult and nuanced as the local food category becomes more mainstream and mature.
- Meeting consumer demand for more information and products that meet their personalized needs requires robust, sophisticated, emotionally compelling, and multi-faceted storytelling that also fits into the soundbite nature of modern communications and connectivity. Vermont’s businesses often lack the resources to invest in packaging updates, “content creation” (e.g., videos, blog posts, social media posts), and social media curation to stay in relationship with target consumers.
- The diversification of consumer demand creates opportunities for success via careful market segmentation; however, segmentation is a nuanced marketing skill that many small businesses lack, and/or lack funds to execute.

- While relevant data at the business level is not publicly available, anecdotal evidence supports the conclusion that Vermont food and farm businesses tend to be under-resourced in executing sophisticated marketing strategies.

Opportunities

- Vermont food products align with current trends for authenticity, purity, and trusted relationships, and consumers seeking highly personal and custom experiences.
- Existing, publicly available market research can be used by the state and individual businesses in segmenting markets and developing targeted content.
- The growth of Vermont’s digital marketing sector provides valuable marketing infrastructure to support Vermont’s food businesses.
- Vermont producers benefit from proximity to major urban markets and a robust tourist economy.
- Vermont producers may benefit from adding attributes to their products such as enhanced nutri-

tional value (e.g., high-protein organic milk), animal welfare benefits (e.g., grass-fed), or other social benefits (e.g., authentic connection back to the farm).

- Vermont food businesses have the authentic experiences and values well suited for behind-the-scenes online and social media storytelling that is attractive to consumers.
- Online platforms designed to enhance marketing through digital content created and shared by consumers offer a means for small farms and food businesses to affordably promote their products and create a community of “brand ambassadors.”
- Vermont is well-positioned for statewide coordination around conducting, interpreting, and collaboratively implementing marketing strategies based on shared understanding of consumer trends specifically focused on Vermont-produced foods.

Summary

Vermont has been successful in cultivating a reputation for high quality food, authentic and trustworthy businesses, and a natural environment that is clean and pure. This reputation has helped to shape the broader brand identity of Vermont food and farm products. Vermont has been a leader in the local, organic, and sustainable food marketplace. As those markets go mainstream, we must be cautious not to lose our competitive edge. The food marketplace is becoming more crowded and nuanced. While there are growing opportunities to tap into consumer trends, we should not underestimate

the competitive pressure and expense of maintaining a visible presence in a multiplicity of media channels and market outlets. If we want to see Vermont’s food and farm economy thrive, we cannot afford continued reliance on fragmented, product-specific marketing messages. Rather, now is the time to invest in coordinated, robust marketing strategies across the state.

Recommendations

- Provide a \$100,000 annual appropriation to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the marketing of Vermont food and farm products.
- Develop a shared communications and graphic design “content creation” position to be co-located between the Agricultural Development Division at VAAFM and the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM) at ACCD to further support outreach to Vermont producers, increase the presence of Vermont food producers on social media and at trade shows, and to strengthen the existing marketing team and coordination with VDTM and the Chief Marketing Office. Initial research recommends \$100,000 per year to support the position, with tactical funds being generated through grant support.
- Provide \$24,000 in funding support to the Vermont Farm to Plate Network to host, in partnership with VDTM and VAAFM, quarterly collaborative marketing summits for

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Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

Investing in Vermont's food, forest and farm economy

By Lynn Ellen Schimoler, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food &
Markets

The 2021 Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Impact Report is now available.

Focus areas and funding categories are annually assessed by the Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) to ensure adequate attention toward the priority issues and needs of the agricultural and forestry industries. Investments are designed to support businesses at pivotal stages of development.

Over 64,000 Vermonters are directly employed by over 11,000 farms and food-related businesses. With nearly 78 percent of its landscape forested, Vermont's culture and economy has come to rely on healthy and productive forests. Annually,

Vermont's forest products industry generates \$1.5 billion in economic output supporting 10,000 jobs in forestry, logging, processing, woodworking, construction, and wood heating.

Working Lands Enterprise Fund (WLEF) investments are able to respond to emerging and impending needs, sectors and markets that have potential and/or challenges. For the Fiscal Year 2021 grant cycle, the WLEB funded Supply Chain Impact Business Grants ranging \$25,000-\$75,000 per award.

- **Production and Processing in Agriculture** – Enhancing production of value-added agriculture or forest-based products and/or manufacturing efficiencies, transitioning to operation as a new processor or expansion as an existing processor, address-

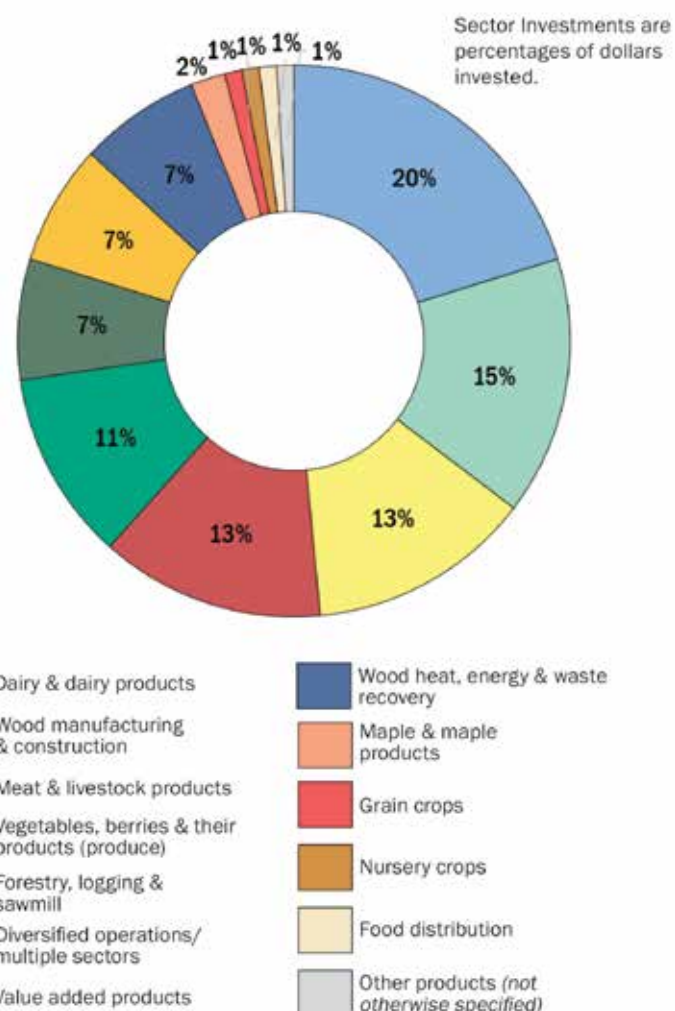
ing known bottlenecks along the supply chain.

- **Low Grade Wood Equipment** – To produce, screen, weigh, or package, wood fuel (firewood, pellets, or chips) for heating; kiln or flow-through dryers; increase commercial sawmill throughput or efficiency.

Technical and business assistance awards to Service Provider organizations focused on business succession planning, marketing development, access to capital and enterprise tools to navigate Covid-19. This chart represents the industry sectors where WLEI has made investments since its inception, for business grantees.

To read the full report, go to workinglands.vermont.gov and search impact report.

2012 TO DATE
OVER \$6M INVESTED



Do you own land in agricultural production that is not very productive?

Want to receive payments for some of this land?

Need help paying for and installing necessary grazing infrastructure?

If you answered "Yes!" to either or both of those statements, consider enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)! CREP takes agricultural land that is located along waterways and is currently in perennial or annual crops out of production to plant riparian forest buffers. Landowners receive an up-front incentive payment as well as annual rental payments for the 15-year duration of the contract. The costs of the project are also nearly always covered at 100% by the FSA, Partners for Fish & Wildlife, and CREP.

In most counties, the cropland and permanent hay/pasture annual rental rates have recently increased, so now is a great time to look into the program!

For more information and to find out if you qualify, contact Ben Gabos at 802-461-3814 or ben.gabos@vermont.gov, or Phillip Wilson at 802-505-5378 or phillip.wilson@vermont.gov.



CREP can help install projects such as the riparian buffer planting, stream crossing, and fence shown here. As part of the pictured project, CREP also installed a pipe and watering system to reduce the need for pastured livestock to drink from this stream.

Dairy Business Viability & Technical Assistance Grants Awarded

By Ollie Cultrara, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is pleased to announce the award of Dairy Business Viability & Technical Assistance Grants to eight businesses and organizations in Vermont and the Northeast. This grant program supports coordinated technical assistance projects that enhance dairy farmer and processor business operations and strengthen market opportunities.

A total of \$398,143 was awarded in grants ranging \$18,000 to \$100,000. The grantees will undertake a range of technical assistance projects. Grantees were required to match at least

25 percent of the awarded funds with either in-kind or cash funds.

- **Center for an Agricultural Economy** in Hardwick, VT was awarded \$18,000 to hire experienced technical assistance providers to work with eight small dairy farms in northern Vermont and New Hampshire on production efficiency, herd health, and milk quality.
- **The Center for Dairy Excellence** in Harrisburg, PA will use their \$65,000 grant to fund technical assistance providers to help small-scale, farm-based value-added dairy businesses in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey with business development.
- **Northwest Regional Planning Commission**

in St Albans, VT was granted \$27,000 on behalf of the Healthy Roots Collaborative to provide a range of technical services to Vermont dairy farmers and processors.

- **Jasper Hill Creamery** in Greensboro, VT will use \$32,363 to work with food safety, business, and legal advisors to write a milk purchasing contract and create tools for other cheesemakers and dairy farmers to write their own contracts.
- **Local Goods Gathered** in Sebago, ME was awarded \$100,000 to expand their food brokerage services by piloting a business model that provides customized technical assistance to Maine creameries.
- **Maine Cheese Guild** in Sidney, ME received

\$30,000 to hire a part-time executive director to lead educational and technical assistance opportunities for the cheesemaking and dairy producing community.

- **Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association** in Unity, ME was awarded \$41,230 to provide technical

assistance to Maine dairy farms for production and business needs resulting from New England dairy market shifts.

- **Vermont Cheese Council** in Waitsfield, VT will invest \$84,550 in expanded educational and professional development programming for cheesemakers.

New Vermont Dairy Promotion Council Logo Helps Spread the Word about Vermont Dairy Farmers

By Scott Waterman, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Since 1983, the Vermont Dairy Promotion Council has managed the money raised in Vermont from the Dairy Checkoff Program. A panel consisting of Vermont dairy farmers, industry experts and Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets officials, the council considers how best to leverage the funds raised from milk sales to increase

consumer awareness about the benefits of dairy and the importance of farm raised milk to our state's economy, heritage and culture.

Starting this spring and rolling out prominently during Dairy Month in June is a new logo created to brand the efforts of the council in the name of Vermont Dairy Farmers. The logo visual embraces the heritage of Vermont's Dairy Farmers connection to the animals, land and environment that gives Vermont its unique sense of place, while also displaying the incredible products that feed our families, friends and communities. Look for this logo and celebrate the benefits of Vermont Dairy Farmers!



USDA

VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



Compiled by Vern Grubinger,
University of Vermont
Extension
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www.vvbga.org

Reports From The Field

(Barnet) Our high tunnels are full of direct seeded mustard greens and spinach as well as Paperpot radish, salad turnips, cilantro, claytonia, lettuce, spinach, bok choy and radish. We spent the cold snap triple covering in our unheated tunnels. Everything did well and is now ready for the upcoming warm weather. Tomato grafts look great and tons of Paperpot trays are planted and growing for field planting.

We have field greens up that were seeded last week, and silage tarped for germination. We transitioned those to row cover and are pleased with the germination.

(Westminster) Our greenhouses are bursting with transplants so with luck it won't be too long before the fields dry out. Then we'll be spreading manure and compost and plowing and harrowing. Green, red and lacinata kale, and lettuce – red and green leaf, romaine and buttercrunch lettuce, and collards will be the first to be planted. We usually start

transplanting mid-April, so we're pretty much on time.

We're planning on the same crop mix as last year, except no celeriac and less broccoli – both had disease problems. We are planting more root crops because our new packing line is running very efficiently; it still requires the same number of workers to run it, but we can move more produce through it.

We're still selling carrots, black radish, and purple daikon from last year; that helps with cash flow this time of year. We hope fuel prices will start easing, but we did fill our off-road diesel tanks just as prices started to rise, so that helped. There aren't many local people applying for work and we're looking for more. Looks like we'll be more dependent than ever on H-2A employees.

(Guildhall) Not too much to report this month. Potato sales continue steady, with some varieties finally selling out (golds, yellows, and reds). We've got 250,000 lbs. left in storage, hopefully will get it all moved soon. Spring comes slow; will be a while yet before we're on the ground.

(Westminster West) Garlic is up and we removed two layers of remay covering the field. Some tipburn from cold damage, it was an extremely cold winter. Mud season was the worst since last mud season! Busy in the propagation house, transplanting celery, tomatoes etc. Ran a soil test on the potting mix, very acid this year so adding some pulverized lime in the mixer. Lucky, I filled all heating

tanks last fall so haven't had to deal with fuel costs yet, but that will happen soon.

One of the tunnels has a high salt content in soil, trying to mitigate that with soaking water and a lot of peat added to the beds. Next summer we will remove the plastic for the rain to really flush it out.

(Hinesburg) Greens growing and selling well. Spinach and Claytonia with a few others coming on. Piecing together the markets for the product so far so good this spring. Some restaurants have fallen off ordering and others have emerged. Farmstand opens today. CSA starts in another week. Crew is great. Juggling projects with the changing weather.

(Elmore) High tunnel is heating up. First red currant bushes are being propagated as hardwood cuttings in the high tunnel beds. Forsythia blooming in the high tunnel. Covering the beds with cardboard so the weeds will not get light and hoping to plant spinach and Chinese cabbages soon in the high tunnel.

Pruned many large apple trees. Collected scionwood from our best trees for three hours the last sunny day we had. Lots of nice buds on the fruit trees, including paw paws. Got to keep the rare and best pear trees going! We name them after the towns in Vermont where they were discovered. Hoping for some good crops of exotics. Being a pioneer is one of the most satisfying things we do on the farm.

(Pownal) My wife and I have finished pruning all of our main crops of

blueberries and raspberries. Big job for just two people but enjoyed being able to be outside and seeing our two English Setters being able to patrol the rows once again.

Our stockpiled mulch chips are still frozen so when the sun and warmer temps help us we will start spreading. Seems like spring start up requires lots of labor and time. And sometime between berry work the two large gardens will need plowing and tilling in the winter rye crop. We sure have noticed the price increases this past year on everything from fertilizer to garden seeds even berry baskets. The increase cost probably will require our price for berries to go up this year, which is something we do not want to do. Also, in this spring we have 100 more raspberries ordered for pick up in early May. Planting should go smoothly if weather cooperates.

VVBGA Spring Webinars Are Posted

You can view these webinars, and many more from previous years, on the VVBGA YouTube Channel.

Food System Plan

continued from page 7

- food and farm businesses to improve marketing skills and understanding of consumer demand (e.g., market research, social media strategies, developing marketing assets, etc.), and identify partnership opportunities.
- Launch a Vermont Brand and Marketing Collaborative to leverage improved marketing strategies and collateral. Include representatives from VDTM, VAAFM,

This spring the topics ranged from Farm First to promoting pollinators to invasive pests to employee management. Check them out.

Pest Management Research Updates

By Scott Lewins and Vic Izzo, UVM

It's spring and despite the remnants of snow, many of us are deep into seeding and planning for the upcoming growing season. What better way to warm up from one of coldest Januarys on record than with an update on our latest pest management projects! Check out our research update at <https://go.uvm.edu/vepart2021> with results from these research projects:

- Pre- and Post-Harvest Strategies for leek moth Control on Diversified Vegetable Farms
- Cultural and biological control tactics for the management of wireworms in root crops
- Evaluation of swede midge tolerance and resistance among four popular kale varieties
- Vermont Pest Scouting and Monitoring Program

and independent businesses in tourism, food, and outdoor recreation.

- Create three Vermont marketing broker positions to develop the regional market for a strategic catalog of Vermont products. Explore developing a three-year pilot program that explores broker logistics for identifying and developing top market channel opportunities within three target urban centers in the Northeast. Cost: \$600,000 over 3 years.

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To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: Agri.agriview@vermont.gov, phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month’s issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

Cattle

Angus x, Jersey x, belgian blue x, due in May 2 dutch belt ready to breed. Georgia VT 802-527-2010 (4)

7 Certified Organic Jersey Bred Heifers from award winning low SCC/high component herd. A2/A2 certified. Due late May through late October. Priced to sell. Contact: Janine Putnam 802-457-1884 janinehistlehillfarm@gmail.com Location: North Pomfret, VT (5)

Heifers for sale: angus x, Jersey x, belgian blue x, due in May 2 dutch belt ready to breed. Georgia VT. 802-527-2010 (5)

Now boarding heifers and beef cattle! If labor’s too hard to find or short on feed, let us board your animals. 300 lbs and up, minimum group size of 50; Excellent facilities and feed is mix of haylage and corn silage or straight haylage, your choice. References available upon request. Call 802-533-2984 (5)

Equipment

1950 Farmall H good rubber, paint, & rims. 802-592-3356 (4)

New Holland TR85 Combine with both grain and corn head. This machine has been in my family for years and lightly used. New oil/filters and batteries throughout machine. Ready for your use. \$10,000. Call or text 802-309-5500. (5)

Dairy Heritage single valve filler capper Includes: Infeed and case off tables Ampco centrifugal pump and controller. Purchased new -

Never used/ \$7,500 Contact: Tom Warren Stone & Thistle Farm East Meredith, NY 13757 warren@stoneandthistlefarm.com 607-278-5800 for photos or more information. (5)

McHale Rs4 bale splitter w/ wrap retainer \$3950 Ag Bagger G-6000 \$3000 JD 630A Hay Head \$2500 FORD(White) 242 18ft Disc \$6,900 Shoreham 802-989-6262 (5)

Bulk milk tank for sale: 1500 gal; DEC; excellent condition, \$8000 OBO. Call 802-533-2984 (5)

Equine

Horse for sale. Halfflinger, 15 hands, 14 years old, strong and gentle, trained to harness by Amish. \$4500. Accompanying equipment also for sale, price negotiable: harness, bobsled, heavy 2 wheeled cart, sulky, cultivator, small spiked harrow, potato plow. Shrewsbury, VT. Art Krueger at 802-492-3653 or knsh@vermontel.net. (5)

Hay, Feed & Forage

Excellent quality first cut wrapped round bales; baleage. Shelburne VT Call Andy 802-598-6060. Analysis available upon request. (3)

Organic haylage 12% protein \$45 per ton, 15% protein \$55 per ton. 802-537-2435 (3)

4x4 round balage mixed grains cut late June. \$30 802-325-3707 (3)

1st cut 4x5 round bales. Don Pettis, 802-265-4566. (3)

Certified Organic First and Second cut wrapped round

bales for sale. Clover, Timothy and mixed grasses. Test samples and delivery available. Call Matt at 802-558-3879. (3)

Vetch & rye seeds for sale, mixed in 50 lb. bags, \$1/lb. certified by Vermont Organic Farmers. Thornhill Farm, 198 Taylor Road, Greensboro Bend, VT 05842, todd@thornhillfarmvermont.com, 802.441.3176 (3)

2021 First cut \$ 4.00 At barn in Ryegate. Steve 802-584-4450 (3)

Hay for sale: 1st cut organic round bales. Randolph Center. Call John at 522-8798 (3)

Certified organic first cut wrapped round bales for sale – cut by mid-June, good sized and well made. Asking \$50/each with 200 bales available. Beidler Family Farm, Randolph Center Contact: 802-728-5601 or brentbeidler@gmail.com. (3)

Excellent quality first, second, and third cut wrapped round bales for sale. First cut by June 1, dry. \$50.00/bale Please call 802-454-7198 (3)

1st, 2nd and 3rd cut haylage and corn silage for sale at the bunk. Call 802-533-2984. (3)

Dry 2nd Cut Hay for Sale 5’ round bales, avg. 750 lbs, \$100/bale- Craftsbury, VT 802-624-0539 (3)

Certified organic 4x4 round bales for sale. First cut 45.00, second and third 55.00. 802-793-7526 (3)

Excellent quality wrapped round bales for sale. \$50/ bale. No emails. Please call 802-454-7198 (3)

1st Cut 4 x 4 Wrapped round bales \$45/bale Call Tom at 802-457-5834 (3)

1st, 2nd & 3rd cut round bales. 2nd cut square bales - \$6.00 per bale. Volume discount for square and round bales. Please call Chris 802-272-0548. (3)

Certified Organic wrapped round bales. Mid-summer first cut @ \$45/bale and 2nd and 3rd cut @ \$55/ bale loaded at the farm in N. Danville. All hay is tedded and raked and feeds out like dry hay. Definitely not frozen.

Perfect for small as well as large ruminates. Email Vince at badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com or call 802-748-8461. (3)

Certified organic wrapped round bales – 1st & 2nd cutting 802-592-3356 (3)

400 Wrapped Bales Available. 1st May cut. 2nd June cut. 3rd July cut. \$80 each. Call (802)446-2791/dlc724@gmail.com (3)

4 X 4 wrapped baleage, good quality. Certified organic. Fair prices. Call Phil at 802-254-6982 (5)

400 Wrapped Bales Available. 1st May cut. 2nd June cut. 3rd July cut. \$80 each. Call (802)446-2791 / dlc724@gmail.com (5)

1st, 2nd and 3rd cut haylage and corn silage for sale at the bunk. Call 802-533-2984. (5)

ADDISON COUNTY

1st cut 4x5 round bales never wet. Good horse & cow hay. 802-948-2627 or 802-558-0166 (3)

Certified organic, small square bales always stacked and stored under cover, 35-40lbs/ bale. \$4/bale, discounts available for large quantities. 802-989-0781 for inquiries. (3)

Hay for Sale in Addison, VT. Large square bales and small squares. \$50-60 for Large, \$3.50-4.50 for Small.

Delivery Available. Call Jack 802-989-8968 (3)

Hay for sale. \$3.25 bale. 802-377-5455 (3)

1st cut 5ft diameter round bales. \$30-\$35Orwell 802-948-2211 (3)

Straw for sale - \$7/bale for 50 or more. \$8/bale for less than 50, \$6/bale for all in the barn, approx. 350. from our winter rye harvest in August. certified organic. Thornhill Farm, Greensboro Bend, 05842, todd@thornhillfarmvermont.com, 802.441.3176 (3)

Hay for Sale, Cows have been sold. 750 Lb 4X5 round bales stored inside or tube wrapped. Bedding/Mulch \$35 Heifer/Beef \$40 Dairy \$55 I will load your truck. In Whiting Call 802-623-6584 (3)

Large organic round bales good heifer/dry cow hay \$45/bale call 802-948-2382 evenings (3)

BENNINGTON COUNTY

Corn Silage 1000 ton plus. Haylage 500 ton plus. Round bales 4x4. Square bales small. 802-394-2976 (3)

CALEDONIA COUNTY

1st & 2nd Cut Alfalfa mix 600lb Wrapped Hay Baleage. For Questions, Prices and Orders call (802) 375-5647 (3)

CHITTENDEN COUNTY

Round bales for horses. Clean first cut timothy mixed grass, quality net wrapped 4’ X 5’ bales. Never wet. \$45. each. 802-879-0391 Westford. (3)

15 large 5x5 round bales mixed grass w/some timothy + clover 800+lbs \$50 ea. call 899-4126 (3)

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FRANKLIN COUNTY

Good Quality Hay 1c & 2c from western US & Canada. Alfalfa orchard & orchard sweet grass 18 to 20% plus protein large bales & organic by trailer loads. Large or small square bales of straw whole or processed at farm we load on direct delivery by trailer load. Mountain View Dairy Farm 802-849-6266 (3)

Excellent 2021 1st cut hay wrapped round bales for sale. Call Wayne (802) 285-6383 (3)

LAMOILLE COUNTY

Organic baled straw. \$5.50/ bale. Organic First Cut Hay. \$5.00/bale. Certified Organic. Valley Dream Farm, Cambridge. 802-644-6598. valleydreamfarm@gmail.com. (3)

ORLEANS COUNTY

Pure alfalfa for sale and also 1st, 2nd and 3rd cut big/ small squares, round bales, wrapped or unwrapped, straw and switch grass. Call Richard at 802-323-3275. (3)

Organic Certified Silage for Sale: We will deliver from our farm or you can come

and pick up. Call for prices and delivery charge. 1-802-744-2444 or 802-274-4934 or 802-744-6553. (3)

North Troy- Good quality Certified organic large round bales, some dry and some wrapped and 9x200 ft ag bags fo haylage. Also conventional large round bales and 9x200ag bags of haylage. Delivery available 802-988-2959 or 802-274-2832 (3)

RUTLAND COUNTY

Good quality 1st and 2nd round bales available, wrapped and dried. Please call 802-446-2435. (3)

WASHINGTON COUNTY

200-4x4 round bales 1st & 2nd cut \$45 each. 802-229-9871 (3)

Excellent quality first, second, and third cut wrapped round bales. Dry. Perfect for horses, dairy, or goats. \$50/bale. No emails. Please call 802-454-7198. (5)

WINDHAM COUNTY

1st cut hay. Good horse hay. \$4.50 bale 802-254-5069 (3)

WINDSOR COUNTY

Hay for sale-400 square bales,

Reading, Windsor County Vt. \$3.50 per bale at the barn. Call 802-484-7240 (3)

4x5 dry round bales \$45.00 delivery available. 802-457-1376 (3)

Rolling Meadows Farm: square bales in the field or barn \$4.00. Delivery can be arranged at \$5.50. Very nice hay from fertilized fields in the South Woodstock and

Reading area. Call 802-484-5540 or goodfarmvt@gmail.com. Ask for David. (3)

1st. cut dry round bales for sale. Never been rained on, stored under cover. \$50. @ 1st. cut haylage bales for sale. \$45. Rte. 5 Weathersfield Bow 802 -546-4340. (3)

4 x 4 wrapped bales, 1st green \$45.,dry \$55. 2nd green \$50.,dry \$60.

Royalton,802-356-1402 royalvillagefarm@gmail.com (4)

1st Cut 4 x 4 wrapped round bales \$45/bale, located in South Pomfret, Call Tom at 802-457-5834 (3)

Quality first cut wrapped round bales for sale 40\$ Each 802-674-2417 (5)



Water Quality

continued from page 5

“For a decade now, this robust partnership has enhanced the momentum behind our conservation work and ensured that our customers and stakeholders are informed and engaged in our collaborative work. This results in a positive impact on our natural resources in Vermont, and I look forward to the continued success of the partnership for decades to come.”

The VAWQP is encouraged by the reduced phosphorus loads and applauds Vermont farmers for everything they continue to do to protect and improve water quality. To learn more about the VAWQP visit <https://vtagcleanwater.org/>.

For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Chill Vermont Gelato LLC, of Montpelier, Vermont to process, package and buy/sell milk, cream, culture products, cheese, evaporated milk products, and ice cream mix within the State of Vermont. If anyone has germane information as to why or why not this company should or should not be licensed those comments are to be sent to:

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by May 31, 2022.

At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.

Agency Contact Numbers

To help you find the right number for your question, please consult the list below. You are always welcome to call our main line 802-828-2430. We will do our best to route you to person most able to answer your question quickly and accurately.

Program Phone Numbers

Act 250	828-2431
Animal Health	828-2421
Business Development.....	828-1619
Dairy	828-2433
Enforcement: Water Quality or Pesticide. . .	828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime.....	828-5050
Licensing & Registration	828-2436
Meat Inspection	828-2426
Produce Program.....	461-5128
Vermont Agriculture & Environmental Lab. .	585-6073
Water Quality BMP.....	828-3474
Water Quality Grants	622-4098
Water Quality Reports.....	272-0323
Weights & Measures	828-2433
Working Lands.....	622-4477



Spring Stress Check

By Elizabeth Sipple, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Are you concerned about behavioral, emotional, or physical changes that you have seen in a neighbor or family member?

Spring is a good time to check-in with your well-being. Spring arrives on the farm with a bunch of exciting work, and also

stress! Agriculture is an economic and social bedrock of Vermont. You are providers – feeding your community and caring for your land. There is so much to love about farm life, but working on a farm, owning a farm, and being part of a farm family are not easy. For decades, farmers, family members, and farm-workers have endured growing challenges that increase their levels of stress.

Stress can impact one’s

physical, emotional, and behavioral health. It’s important to be aware of the symptoms of stress, as stress is not always obvious, particularly if you have become habituated to it. Any significant changes in how you experience emotions, behave, or feel physically can be a clue that stress may be adversely impacting you. The symptoms of stress are different for everyone, but here are some common ones:

Physical: Headaches, stomach issues, increased blood pressure, clenched jaw, muscle tension, sudden

perspiration, rapid heartbeat, and back pain

Emotional: Impatience, frustration, depression, difficulty controlling emotions, anxiousness, anger, and difficulty with change

Behavioral: Increased use of alcohol or recreational drugs, misuse of prescription medication, yelling more, lack of communication, physically harming others, difficulty relaxing, and sleep issues

Are you experiencing any of the above? Are you concerned about changes that you have seen in a neighbor

or family member? If you want to explore what can be done about stress, please contact Farm First. It is possible to manage and even reduce stress.

Farm First is a Vermont-based program focused on providing farmers and their families, with FREE support, resources, and information to reduce stress. You can reach Farm First at:

Call: (802) 318-5538 during daytime work hours

Call: 877-493-6216 outside of daytime work hours

Email: Karen Crowley at karenc@farmfirst.org

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2022 Vermont’s Fairs and Field Days

Vermont’s classic country fairs are a favorite summer past-time for Vermonters and visitors alike. Drawing over 700,000 visitors and exhibitors every year, Vermont’s fairs and field days represent an important opportunity to promote agricultural literacy and provide insight into our unique cultural heritage. They’re also a great source of entertainment and fun for the whole family! Please be sure to visit fair websites for the most up to date information.

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Vermont Dairy Festival
June 2-5, 2022 | • Vermont State Fair
August 16-20, 2022 |
| • The Bradford Fair
July 14-7, 2022 | • Caledonia County Fair
August 8, 2022 |
| • Lamoille County Field Days
July 22-24, 2022 | • Bondville Fair
August 26-28, 2022 |
| • Pownal Valley Fair
TBD | • Champlain Valley Fair
August 26 - September 4, 2022 |
| • Deerfield Valley Farmers Day
August 12-14 2022 | • Guilford Fair
September 5-6, 2022 |
| • Franklin County Field Days
August 4-7, 2022 | • Orleans County Fair
September 7-11, 2022 |
| • Addison County Fair & Field Day
August 9-13, 2022 | • The Tunbridge Fair
September 15-18, 2022 |



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Food Hub Infrastructure Grants Awarded

By Julia Scheier, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets is pleased to announce \$300,000 in sub-awards to five regional nonprofit food hubs as part of a 2021 Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) award. NBRC is a state-federal partnership with a mission to fund economic development and infrastructure projects. This investment will support Vermont food hubs with critical infrastructure needs, allowing them to support more farm and food businesses, expand their workforce, and advance ongoing efforts to access larger markets. Funds are in response to additional local food aggregation and distribution needs experienced by Vermont food hub organizations and further evidenced by the supply chain disruption impacts of COVID-19.

A priority focus of this NBRC award is to expand Vermont producers' access to out-of-state metropolitan markets and support opportunities for farm and food producers of many sizes to access new markets in cities like Albany, Boston,

and New York City. Awarded projects to the nonprofit recipients will last for two years and include:

- **Food Connects** in Brattleboro, VT will use \$95,764 to help build out their cold, frozen, and dry storage capacity in their new aggregation space. This will expand their capacity to serve markets in Boston, New York City, and Washington, DC, in collaboration with Vermont Way Foods.
- **Center for an Agricultural Economy** in Hardwick, VT will use \$71,823 to support the outfit of their 3,000 square foot space at the Yellow Barn project, doubling their local product storage capacity. This will support expanded frozen inventory for their Just Cut program, serving institutional markets, and better position Farm Connex to distribute to Boston, New York City, and other regional markets in partnership with Vermont Way Foods.
- **ACORN** in Middlebury, VT will use \$60,618 to build a centralized aggregation and distribution space for rural farms/producers to store their products. This will allow for larger distribution networks and retail locations to have more streamlined access to Addison County products year-round.
- **Vermont Farmer's Food Center** in Rutland, VT will use \$37,348 to purchase a new

cargo van fit up for refrigeration to transport regional products to their aggregation space. This will allow them to strengthen their supply chain logistics role along the Route 7 corridor, allowing for regional haulers increased access to Rutland County food products.

- **Intervale Center** in Burlington, VT will use \$34,447 to purchase, outfit, and install a walk-in deep freezer that will double frozen storage capacity at the Intervale Food Hub. This will help maintain year-round availability of highly desired frozen products and allow them to pilot an expansion of direct-to-consumer shipping of local product to statewide and regional markets.

This award recognizes the importance of bolstering regional food system infrastructure. Food hubs play a critical role in supporting farm and food businesses of all sizes, offering an ability to aggregate, store, distribute, and market products from all over the state, maintaining source identification, transparency in pricing structures, and values-led relationships with producers. While many businesses rely on robust markets outside of Vermont to sustain or grow their enterprise, distribution bottlenecks make this difficult. The Vermont Agriculture and

Food System Plan notes that a "lack of in-state warehousing and cross-docking makes distribution throughout the state less efficient" and that "delivery to metropolitan areas is logistically challenging," even though these larger cities offer significant market opportunity.

NBRC funding aligns with the Vermont Agriculture and Food System Plan's Priority Strategy #7, which calls for "significant investment in storage, processing, and distribution

infrastructure to...expand regional market access for businesses and increase the resilience of local supply chains." This funding will not only support each individual entity, but allow for increased collaboration, shared infrastructure, and greater efficiency between food hubs in different parts of the state to reach beyond Vermont's borders.

For more information about these grants, contact Julia Scheier at 802-522-7042 or by email julia.scheier@vermont.gov

For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Agricultural Water Quality Regulations: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report now available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 any-time day or night, or visit: www.farmfirst.org
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: info@vcil.org or visit: www.vcil.org.

For more agricultural events visit our Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses webpage at: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities

Join the CT River Watershed Farmers Alliance!



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\$100 INDIVIDUAL MEMBER
\$250 BUSINESS MEMBER
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-DISCOUNTED NO-TILL DRILL RENTAL FOR MEMBERS
www.CRWFA.org
(203) 470-9148
CRWFA.info@gmail.com

Farm Feature: Jericho Settlers Farm

By Ollie Cultrara, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Farmers tailor their operations to meet their unique management styles. In this series, the Produce Program at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets features practices that Vermont fruit and vegetable growers use to enhance food safety, increase efficiency, protect product quality, and improve employee satisfaction. This month, we're featuring Jericho Settlers Farm, a certified organic CSA and wholesale farm specializing in year-round vegetable production in Jericho, Vermont.

Standard Operating Procedures at JSF

Jericho Settlers Farm

puts a strong emphasis on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as a management tool. They have SOPs for several elements of their wash/pack operation, including setting up and operating their wash lines and equipment for greens and roots.

For example, the farm's Sanitizer SOP describes how to dispense and monitor sanitizer in wash water, emphasizing worker safety as well as food safety. Adding a small amount of sanitizer approved for use in wash water is a good agricultural practice that helps prevent potential cross-contamination of food-borne pathogens that may occur between crops. Sanitizers are typically dispensed in concentrated form, so workers should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and follow

safe handling practices. The farm's Sanitizer SOP includes clear step-by-step instructions and the locations of tools and supplies needed for each step. The procedure begins with a reminder of required safety measures, such as wearing closed-toed shoes and PPE (gloves and safety glasses) provided by

the farm. The SOP describes corrective actions to take in various situations, such as if the sanitizer concentration is too low or when the water temperature is too high. The final section instructs the worker to record the date, time, volume of sanitizer, water temperature, and sanitizer concentration to

document and verify that the procedure was completed.

Why it works

According to farmer Christa Alexander, the biggest benefit of SOPs is clarity. She says their SOPs help get the whole crew on the same page and promote worker satisfaction, because

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Upcoming Grant Opportunities

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.

Programs Open Year-Round Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Jenn LaValley
Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov
(802) 828-2431

Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Mary Montour
Mary.Montour@vermont.gov
(802) 461-6087

Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Sonia Howlett
Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov
(802) 522-4655

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on Vermont agricultural land.

Ben Gabos
Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov
(802) 461-3814

Phil Wilson
Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov
(802) 505-5378

May

Farm Agronomic Practices Program

Per-acre payments for conservation practices on Vermont farms and support for one-time water quality educational events or trainings

Nina Gage
Nina.Gage@vermont.gov
(802) 622-4098

June

Dairy Processor Innovation Grant

Grants for dairy processors to position their businesses for long-term success.


Kathryn Donovan
Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov
(802) 585-4571

August

Working Lands Enterprise Fund Service Provider Grants & Contracts

Grants and contracts for service providers that support agriculture and forestry businesses.

Lynn Ellen Schimoler
Working.Lands@vermont.gov
(802) 585-9072



**JERICO
SETTLERS
FARM, Inc.**

Standard Operation Procedure for:

Greens Washline


Washing Greens: Cut, Bunched, & Heads

The cut greens washline consists of one stainless steel pick table, one stainless steel greens washer conveyor, one commercial greens spinner, and one stainless steel mixing table.

To Wash Greens:

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS: NITRILE GLOVES
GLOVES & SAFETY GLASSES FOR TSUNAMI USE
These are stored on the metal rack to the right of Cooler 2.

- Before you begin washing greens, clean the Greens Washing Equipment line by following all steps in 2020 Greens Line Preparation SOP.



2. Fill Greens Washer with water from the green hose clamped to the side of the washer. This house is designated for this use only and stays in place.

Notes on Water Fill Level:
Heads, Bunches, Bulky Greens (ex: kale, chard, braising) Fill water to 1.5" mark above small bolt head above the conveyor. This is ~225 gallons of water and takes up to 45 minutes to fill depending on water pressure.
Small Cut Greens (ex: arugula, spinach, mesclun) Fill water to the lower mark (bolt) above conveyor. This is ~205 gallons of water and takes up to 40 minutes depending on water pressure.

- Once water has reached level, add Tsunami sanitizer to the main water tank of the Greens Washer. Follow protocol for Tsunami use at sanitizer station. Use proper PPE.
Heads, Bunches, Bulky Greens (ex: kale, chard, braising) - 225 gal water = 335mL of Tsunami
Small Cut Greens (ex: arugula, spinach, mesclun) - 205 gal water = 300 mL of Tsunami

Jericho Settlers Farm's standard operating procedures have photos, numbered steps to make them easy to follow.

Meat Birds

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Exempt poultry must also be labeled properly. All labels must include the name and address of the farm, a statement that is prominently displayed as “Exempt per 6 V.S.A 3312(b): NOT INSPECTED”, and safe handling and cooking instructions.

Please remember that farmers producing more than 20,000 birds annually or owners wanting to sell poultry products in ways other than those allowed under the Exemption from Inspection must acquire



inspection from a state or federal poultry inspector.

Those who do choose to slaughter poultry on the farm under the Exemption from Inspection, whether for personal use or sale to customers, should always

understand and follow sanitary standards and practices.

- Make sure you have ample supply of potable running water and a plan in place to remove waste.
- Ensure equipment and

utensils used for the process are in good repair, clean, and free of rust.

- Monitor your grounds and prevent harborage and breeding of pests.
- Wear clean clothing, aprons, and frocks to

prevent contamination.

- Follow good biosecurity practices to protect your backyard flock from high pathogenic avian influenza and other diseases.

With a few good sanitation techniques in place, you will be on your way to producing wholesome poultry for your own use or for sale directly to your customers.

For more information on the requirements around processing and selling exempt poultry, please visit the Agency of Agriculture’s website at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/>.

Jericho Settlers Farm

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expectations and effective performance are clearly defined. SOPs make it easier to build food safety practices into the routine of the farm. They are also helpful for consistent and effective training. Since their SOPs document the most efficient way to complete key tasks, the steps are easy to explain the same way every time a new employee comes on board. Numbered steps, photos of equipment, and contact information for

questions all help round out the documents.

Next Steps

Standard Operating Procedures can help your crew consistently perform a variety of farm tasks, from seeding to sanitizing food contact surfaces. For more information about on-farm food safety and resources for developing excellent SOPs, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram or get in touch with the Vermont Produce Program at FSMA@vermont.gov



Jericho Settlers Farm's sanitizer station has all materials in one place, including PPE and measuring tools. The sanitizer container is fitted with a pump for controlled and safe dispensing.

VAAFM Water Quality Grantee Survey

We want your feedback! If you have participated in any VAAFM Water Quality grant programs in the past two years, please fill out an online survey about your experience to help us improve. Responses are anonymous and the survey should only take about 10 minutes to complete. Look in your email to find the link to the survey, or type in this link in your browser: <https://forms.office.com/g/rn561VWkMm>

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